

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/708,685
Response filed December 6, 2006
Reply to OA dated September 11, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, 9, 10 32, 36 and 40 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 2, 8, 21, 24, 30, 31, 34, 35 and 39 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention. The applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated September 11, 2006.

At the outset, the applicants thank the Examiner for now indicating that claims 1, 5, 7, 14, 16, 20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33 and 37 have been allowed. Also, the applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 4, 6, 10 - 13, 18 and 19 would be allowable if amended in the manner suggested in item 24, page 9 of the outstanding Action.

However, claims 32, 36 and 40 have been objected to for the reasons discussed in item 1, page 2 of the outstanding Action. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

As indicated above, claims 32, 36 and 40 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, the outstanding objections to these claims are now moot.

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Further, the drawings have been objected to for the reasons set forth in item 2, page 2 of the outstanding Action. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these objections.

The applicants have submitted herewith annotated and replacement sheets of drawings for Figure 7, wherein in Fig.7, the nodes (Nx0, Nx1, and Nx2), described in paragraph 84 of the applicants' specification, have accordingly been properly labeled.

The applicants request that the replacement sheet for Fig. 7, submitted herewith, be approved by the Examiner, and that the outstanding objections to the drawings be withdrawn.

Claims 31, 35, and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth in item 4, page 3, of the outstanding Action. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection.

As indicated above, claims 31, 35, and 39 have been amended in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention, and in order to correct the noted informalities therein.

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Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding indefiniteness rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

As to the merits of this case, the following rejections are set forth in the outstanding Action:

(1) claims 2, 3, 8, 9, 21, 22, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ando (U.S. Patent No. 6,230,098);

(2) claims 8, 9, 24 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando in view of Ninagawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,075,467);

(3) claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando in view of Ikeuchi (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0082773);

(4) claim 28 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando in view of Ninagawa, and further in view of Gorai (EP 1 102 228); and

(5) claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ando in view of Ninagawa, and further in view of Ikeuchi.

The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections.

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As indicated above, claims 3, 9, 32, 36 and 40 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, the outstanding rejections of claims 3, 9, 32, 36 and 40 are now moot. Accordingly, the withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of claims 3, 9, 32, 36 and 40 is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

Furthermore, each of independent claims 2, 21, 30 and 34 has been amended in order to incorporate therein the subject matters of claim 3 and allowable claim 4. Also, each of independent claims 8 and 24 has been amended in order to incorporate therein the subject matters of claim 9 and allowable claim 10. Accordingly, because each of independent claims 2, 8, 21, 24, 30 and 34 contains allowable subject matters, the outstanding rejections of independent claims 2, 8, 21, 24, 30 and 34 (and any claims that depend therefrom) are now moot.

In view of the above, the withdrawal of the outstanding rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a) is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

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As to the remaining claims 31, 35 and 39, these claims include features corresponding to allowable claim 1 (i.e., the claimed feature of determining the presence of update of matching data). Thus, it is the applicants position that independent claims 31, 35 and 39 should now be similarly allowable.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, specification, claims and drawings, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

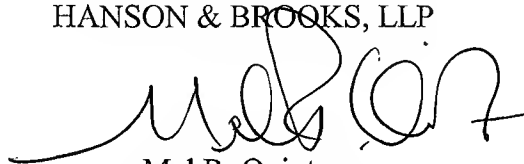
If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures: Annotated/Replacement Sheets of Drawing (Fig. 7)

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